

Preliminary Amendment  
USSN 09/003,685

Attorney Docket No.: 020245.0105

**Amendments to the Specification**

Please amend the specification as follows:

Page 7, between lines 11 and 12, insert:

-- According to another aspect of the invention, the O<sub>2</sub> gas within the biological reduction chamber is agitated to increase permeation of the O<sub>2</sub> into the material being treated. Any means of moving O<sub>2</sub> within the chamber can be used. For example, forced air can be used to distribute the O<sub>2</sub> evenly throughout the biological burden reduction chamber.

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According to a further aspect of the invention, the O<sub>2</sub> in the biological burden reduction chamber is maintained at a concentration of about 0.1% to about 100%, preferably 0.1% to 25%, and more preferably 3% to 16%, per total volume of gases in the biological burden reduction chamber. The amount of O<sub>2</sub> employed depends upon the material being treated.

According to yet a further aspect of the invention, the water vapor present in the continuous stream of O<sub>2</sub> can be controlled prior to applying the continuous stream of O<sub>2</sub> to the material being treated.

Preferably, the pressure within the biological burden reduction chamber is maintained at a pressure between about 0 psia and 20 psia.--